

Opposition to SB 832

Dear Co-Chair Kennedy, Co-Chair Miner, Co-Chair Demicco, Vice Chair Flexer, Vice Chair Gresko, Vice Chair Somers, Ranking Member Harding, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

Please accept this public hearing testimony in **OPPOSITION to SB 832**.

I care about animals, including all wildlife, and I always vote. I strongly support and promote humane resolutions to any conflicts with wildlife, including preventative measures that would guarantee to minimize risks of such conflicts.

Therefore, **I oppose SB 832** as currently written for the following reasons:

1) SB 832 does not address the major sources of habituation (e.g., accessible garbage, pet food left outside, certain types of bird feeders)! As currently written, SB 832 does not serve to address the issue of conflicts with potentially dangerous wildlife;

2) SB 832 would unfairly penalize those who care for community cats. Sec. 1 (e), which defines "potentially dangerous animal" for purposes of this section, includes "felidae," a broad family of felids that includes domestic cats. Community cat caregivers provide a public service at oftentimes great personal expense, reducing cat overpopulation through TNR (trap, neuter, return) programs, a science-based approach that has been proven effective. Absence of this public service would generate a near-immediate outcome of overcrowded conditions and stretched resources at animal control agencies and shelters. Rather than penalizing these generous caregivers, and stretching the already strapped animal care infrastructure, emphasis should instead be placed on proactive solutions, like laws and ordinances that focus on incentivizing spay/neuter and humane management programs for community cats;

3) SB 832 would be unpopular and unenforceable. Sec. 1 (e) contains the biological family names "felidae" and "canidae," which include domestic cats and domestic dogs. Inclusion of these categories would be hugely unpopular with Connecticut voters, and as a practical matter, unenforceable;

4) Unlike last year's bill (2016's HB 5315), SB 832 makes no provision for essential and badly needed public education.

Substitute language that would address the matter of habituation and conflict prevention through public education on coexisting with coyotes and bears must be included. The DEEP should partner with HSUS (The Humane Society of the United States), a trusted leader in the fight to protect wildlife through community engagement in order to develop educational materials that are effective, humane, science-based, sustainable, and provide that such educational materials include the topics of removal of attractants and hazing techniques.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Natalie Jarnstedt
250 Stanwich Road
Greenwich, CT 06830